(b) and (c) The entire State of Jammu & Kashmir is an integral part of the Indian Union. The issue which remains to be resovled is the vacation of the territory of the State of Jammu & Kashmir which is under Pakistan's illegal and forcible occupation. India's position on Jammu & Kashmir was conveyed to Pakistan during the Foreign Secretary level talks held in Islamabad from 19-23 June, 1997. The position was also reiterated by the Indian Foreign Secretary during his press conference in New Delhi on 25 June, 1997.

Unauthorised Occupation

31. DR. BALIRAM: Will the Minister of URBAN AFFAIRS AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to refer to the reply given to Unstarred Question No. 804 dated February 26, 1997 and state:

(a) whether the information has since been collected;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF URBAN AFFAIRS AND EMPLOYMENT (DR. U. VENKATESWARLU): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the Sabha.

Leprosy

32. SHRI K.H. MUNIYAPPA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the estimated number of leprosy patients in the country at present;

(b) whether there is an increase in the incidence of leprosy patients during the last three years;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) the details of measures taken by the Government to check this disease;

(e) whether the Government have also launched any special rehabilitation programmes for these patients; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY): (a) The estimated number of cases in the country at present is 0.68 million.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) National Leprosy Eradication Programme is being implemented as a 100% Centrally Sponsored Scheme in all States/UTs with an aim to achieve elimination of leprosy as a Public Health Problem by the year 2000. All the 490 districts in the country have been sanctioned Multi Drug Therapy (MDT) Scheme for free treatment services to all the leprosy patients. Community awareness is being increased through information, education and communication activities. Continuous contact survey, School survey and sample survey are being carried out for early detection of leprosy. Special action project for elimination of leprosy has been developed for difficult to reach and inaccessible areas.

(e) and (f) Under the National Leprosy Eradication Programme Services are provided for (i) Medical correction of disabilities, (ii) Physiotherapy services, (iii) Prosthetics and appliances, (iv) Care of hands, eye and feet (v) Care of leprosy ulcer. Deformity and ulcer care services are being strengthened.

Reconstructive surgery for the deformity which are correctable are being done at selected centres at present which are proposed to be strengthned further.

Economic and vocational Rehabilitation is done by Ministry of Welfare.

Financial Assistance through Minister's Discretionary Grant

33. SHRI RAMASHRAYA PRASAD SINGH: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received complaints from various States particularly from Andhra Pradesh relating to provision of financial assistance from the Minister's discretionary grant to the needy patients during the current year;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government have taken any action on these complaints;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY): (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (e) Do not arise.

Female Circumcision

34. SHRI DILEEP SANGHANI:

SHRIMATI BHAVNA BEN DEVRAJ BHAI CHIKHALIA:

SHRIMATI SHEILA GAUTAM

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether his attention has been drawn to the State of World Population Report 1997 brought out by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) stating that "some minority groups in India" are reported to have undergone some form of female circumcision;